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PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLD RUEHLZ

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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0400

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3477

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1295

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1162

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1731

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

RHEHNNSC/NSC WASHDC

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2295

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000317

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB, INL

TREASURY FOR BAKER/LANIER

USAID/W FOR EE/AA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [EAID](#) [SNAR](#) [RS](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN CONSIDERS NATIONAL ANTI-MONEY
LAUNDERING PROGRAM AT WORKSHOP

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: At a World Bank-sponsored anti-money laundering workshop, international and regional experts focused on the need for innovation, information technology, annual reviews, and international contact networks in discussing how to create financial intelligence units. At the close of the seminar, the representative from Turkmenistan's Central Bank stated that Turkmenistan needs to join the Eurasian Group, a regional anti-money laundering organization, as a full member. From all appearances, from level of attendance to the fact that key government figures gathered right after the conclusion of the workshop to continue discussing their next actions, Turkmenistan's government is ready to work seriously on anti-money laundering. If Turkmenistan joins the Eurasian Group as a full member, this would be yet another significant move towards greater involvement with the world community. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (SBU) In coordination with the Central Bank of Turkmenistan (CBT), the World Bank (WB) organized a workshop on Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Intelligence Units in Ashgabat March 4-5. The event was widely attended by representatives from most of Turkmenistan's law enforcement, justice, financial and monetary agencies, including the Parliament, President's Office (Department on Law Coordination), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, General Prosecutor's Office, State Counternarcotics Service, State Tax Inspection Service, State Customs Service, State Border Service, Supreme Audit Chamber, State Statistics Committee, Institute for Strategic Planning and Economic Development, Supreme Council on Science and Technology, Academy of Sciences, Supreme Court, State Insurance Company, State Fund for Precious Metals and Stones, Ministry of Social Welfare

(Department of Investments and Pension Contribution Management). Representatives from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Eurasian Group also participated.

¶ 14. (SBU) Chair of the workshop and Head of the CBT's Supervision Department Halmurad Orazov opened the meeting by acknowledging Turkmenistan's entrance as an observer into the Eurasian Group, a regional anti-money laundering organization established in 2004 under the initiative of the Russian Federation. He emphasized the importance of consulting with the world community in establishing a financial intelligence unit in Turkmenistan. Orazov said that a parliamentary task force is currently working on adopting an anti-money-laundering law.

¶ 15. (SBU) Throughout the workshop, many of the experts stressed that a discussion of this topic did not mean that anyone was criticizing Turkmenistan's financial industry. In addition, speakers emphasized a thorough review process on an annual basis is healthy and necessary to keep up with innovative criminals who will find new ways of laundering money through technology and other means. They also emphasized the need to build an international network of contacts, because money laundering activities are transnational. Stanislav Smolyar of the Russian Federal Financial Monitoring Service and the Eurasian Group's Working Group on Technical Assistance also urged Turkmenistan to use information technology to fight money laundering and offered the EAG's assistance with that task. The IMF's Giuseppe Lombardo reported that the IMF had worked closely with the Government of Turkmenistan on two drafts of the anti-money

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laundering law that the Parliament is currently considering. Noting a decree that President Berdimuhamedov issued in December 2007 which prohibits anonymous (or numbered) accounts, Lombardo said that Turkmenistan has shown that it is serious about combating money laundering and offered further IMF assistance.

¶ 16. (SBU) In his closing remarks, Orazov called for Turkmenistan to join the Eurasian Group as a full member. He noted the need for capacity building and acknowledged that Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and other countries offered assistance. The World Bank/UNODC's Global Anti-Money Laundering Program Mentor, Cari Votava, agreed with Orazov that it is time for Turkmenistan to join the Eurasian Group as a full member, adding that she had initiated this discussion with the Central Bank in September, and had pressed for it as recently as March 3. She suggested that next steps for Turkmenistan should include adoption of an anti-money laundering law authorizing establishment of a financial intelligence unit and reviewing other laws (criminal procedure code, and laws on banking, customs, insurance, securities, casinos, investment, etc.) for potential conflicts.

¶ 17. (SBU) COMMENT: Votava noted participation by Turkmen officials at this anti-money laundering conference was the best she's seen in Central Asia over the past three years and took this as a sign of the seriousness that Turkmenistan attaches to this problem. This is not surprising, given both Turkmenistan's increased interest over the last year in participating in a growing number of regional organizations and its traditional focus on maintaining order and security. One minute after the workshop ended, key Turkmen officials gathered at a table to continue internal discussions. As Orazov mentioned in his closing remarks, "This (workshop) is just the first step." END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND